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S O M E

OBSERVATIONS

O N

DR. BROWN'S DISSERTATION

On the RISE, UNION, &c. &c. &c. of

POETRY AND MUSICK.

S O M E
O B S E R V A T I O N S

O N

DR. BROWN'S DISSERTATION

On the RISE, UNION, &c. &c. &c. of

P O E T R Y A N D M U S I C K.

In a LETTER to Dr. B*****.

causas & vitia & modos

Ludumque fortunae

Periculosaè plenum opus aleae

Tractas.

HOR.

L O N D O N.

Printed for W. JOHNSTON, in Ludgate-Street.

M DCC LXIV.

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OBSERVATIONS

ON

DR. BROWN'S DISSERTATION

Sec. of



SICILY

IN A LETTER TO DR. BROWN

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LONDON: Printed by W. Johnston, in Ludgate-Street.

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MDCCLXXIV.

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LONDON.

Hor.

L O N D O N

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MDCCLXXIV.

LETTER to Dr. ****.

Dear Dr.

IN a retirement so remote from the scene and the objects of my past life and studies, it is a great satisfaction to find myself not utterly forgotten by the friends I have left behind me; and that, amidst the elegant pleasures of conversation and literature, the idea of a poor rustic like me can sometimes intrude. I find you do me the honour to consider me as one not lost to the *love of poetry and prate* (the true definition of criticism) but still preserving my old fondness for these *dulcissime vana*, amidst much more useful, and, therefore, more valuable objects **** and ****, and dung-carts. Your being convinced of this, I suppose, I owe to some lusty packets you have at different times received from me, which, perhaps, convinced you of nothing else; I was in some hopes you were going to pay me in kind, however different in value, when I saw the packet arrive at ****, and was somewhat disappointed when I opened it: however, both the author and the subject awakened my curiosity and attention: the name of Dr. Brown led me to expect something new and curious; and the subject, proposed in such extent, and of itself so bewitching, (especially to me who

had employed, you know how much of my thoughts on a small part of it) and the desire I had of the fullest information on these points, ~~both for my own sake, and lest I should impose~~ falsehoods on the world, if ever I published my thoughts: all these concurred to make me read the work through with an eagerness of attention which, perhaps, it will not always meet with. I mean not to imply, that I am therefore qualified to pronounce on the performance: the matters it treats are so various, extensive, and complicated, that I have, by no means, the vanity to pretend to be a judge: but, in compliance with your commands, I here send you such reflections as occurred to me on the perusal of it, and particularly of those parts, with the subject of which I happened to be especially conversant by the course of my reading. *Multi multa possunt sed nemo omnia.*

I observe, in general, that of all arts or exertions of human faculty, those which Dr. B. has chosen for his subject are most liable to be influenced by a variety of causes, the most uncertain in their operation; seemingly most remote and minute, and most difficult to be observed. The taste, the inclination, and the habits of mankind, or of any portion of them, so much depending not only on temperature, climate, habitation, wants, employment, government, but on a thousand accidents, few of which are observable even at the time they happen, or can be afterward known, which introduce such a bewildering variety of passions and associations, from whence these arts proceed, or to which they apply, that to think by laying down one or a few principles to deduce the progress of them systematically, is parallel to Almanack-makers foretelling the weather, and not equal to the modesty of that renowned Philosopher of our acquaintance, who owned he was not yet able to calculate earthquakes.

II. That though it cannot be denied that such researches have their utility, as tending to improve arts that have a tendency to improve mankind, yet, in the present state of things, those arts themselves are become so much more matter of amusement than use, and the help which such enquiries afford toward improvement of their subject-arts bearing a very small proportion to the accuracy, pains, and study which they require; such disquisitions as Dr. Brown's are to be considered, not as important *investigations*, but almost entirely as amusing gratifications of curiosity; a curiosity liberal, indeed, and elegant, but no more.

From both these it will follow:

III. That the Doctorial manner, the air of science with which it has been so fashionable of late to advance conjectures, is equally unsuitable to the purpose, and the topics of such dissertations.

And,

IV. That since information is the principal purpose they can answer, misrepresentation, or even error in matter of fact, is less excusable in them than any other kind of enquiry. In labouring to discover truths that have a real importance to mankind, the pursuit is laudable, tho' unsuccessful, and is often attended with some accidental or collateral advantage, tho' it fails of its purposed end, or, at any rate, the student was in his duty: but here, who hath required this at thine hand? He who knows any truth of innocent tendency serves or amuses mankind by acquainting them with it: but he who does not know what is not of importance to know, if he pretends to inform mankind, wastes most idly their time and attention as well as his own. How far this is applicable to those parts of Dr. B—'s work, wherein the origin and history of the sister-

arts, particularly poetry, is pretended to be traced, is the point to be examined.

I know, if these remarks were to appear, Dr. B— and those who admire his work, would tell us, that this is not treating the matter fairly; that this work is intended as a part only of a vast and comprehensive plan of great and general utility, wherein will be laid open, &c. &c. Be this as it may, it must be *conceded* that no ill-grounded assertion or defective argument can be a necessary part of any chain of useful or solid reasoning; and that in matter of less importance, he who refutes such is, at least, as well employed as he who advances them.

I will not take advantage of the obvious ridicule which arises from the searching for the seeds and principles of all the most refined and transporting poetry of Greece in the dreary wilds of North America; the tracing the progress of the embryo from its *punctum saliens* to its *adult state*, with more than anatomical precision; and even foretelling exactly the several changes that must happen, and the periods of them (upon a presumption that they did happen accordingly): my business shall be only with matter of fact, and I shall content myself with shewing, that these *prophecies of the past* were not fulfilled.

In the first place, it is taken for granted all along that the poetry, and musick, and legislation, and religion, of Greece, were entirely the spontaneous productions of the climate; and it is so far true, that the improvement and flourishing of them were owing to the happy talents and activity of that lively, free, and spirited race:—but it is as certain that the first seeds of them were *imported* †: agriculture, they are said to have

got

† Diodorus Siculus recounts a large catalogue of the sages and artists of early times, who brought, says he, from Egypt *all* the arts; which acquired them so much reputation in Greece. Of this he says he had *proofs* given him, and is particularly full in shewing, that

got from Sicily, the arts of the builder and carpenter, the first of civilized life, from Crete: Orpheus, *αὐτὸς δὲ πατήρ*, as Pindar styles him, is well known to have brought both his gods, his mysteries, and his musick from Egypt: the most celebrated oracle of Greece, that of Delphos, was founded by a colony of Cretans *, and these were either a part, or the descendants and scholars of one from the East: the next in reputation, and, I believe, prior in antiquity, that of Dodona, by an Egyptian woman †; and it was at the command of this oracle that the Egyptian names and ritual were introduced ‡. The founders of their empires and illustrious families were roving adventurers, or exiles, from Phœnicia and Egypt: Cecrops, Pelops, Cadmus, Phoroneus, styled the son of the river Inachus, (which implies that he came from beyond sea, and was first seen in that river up which he sailed and landed on its banks.)

Dr. B—'s system, therefore, that the most ancient Gods among the civilized Greeks were their early legislators, who taught the savage tribes the first arts of life, cannot hold, since their first civilizers did certainly introduce foreign Gods, and were not the object of worship themselves. Cecrops, who instituted marriage, the distinction of human life from brutal, was an Egyptian, and, of course, bigotted to the religion of his

that this was the case of Orpheus, he names also Musæus, Melampus, and Dædalus, (the general opinion is, that the latter of these came from Crete); and in many striking instances shews, that the religion of Greece was partly Egyptian mythology, and partly fables founded by the Greeks on Egyptian customs. See Edit. Rhodomani, p. 86. 20.

* 9.

• Hom. hymn. ad Apol.

† Herod. Euterpe, cap. 52. & cap. 54. where the whole fable of the Doves founding it is explained, and demonstrated to have arisen from thence.

‡ Ibidem. cap. 52.

country, which he must have introduced : and Orpheus *, who had the very simplest principles of morality to teach them [*φρονιματιχιστα*] introduced as a sanction and security to his laws; religious rites, [*τελεται*] and the worship of the gods; *rites*, which he had certainly learned in the mysterious Egypt †, and Gods which we have the fullest testimony were of foreign extraction ‡. To prove this point of their deities being strangers, and different from their *heroes and founders* (whose age, commonly called the Heroic, was some generations before and a few after the war of Troy) I shall not enter into the vast field of chronological and mythological dissertation wherein so many genius's have been lost; nor found a system upon detached and perverted scraps; but content myself with one general observation, whose force will be best perceived by those of a general insight into the Greek learning. The traditions concerning their gods, having been imperfectly transmitted, and more imperfectly understood, are so perplexed and obscure, that we are yet at a loss whether to derive them from traditions concerning the ancient rulers of those people from whom they learned them, or from their mystical and allegorical accounts of the great works of nature; and it is most probable that both these have been jumbled: whereas the accounts concerning their

* Ορφευς μιν γαρ τελεταις θ' ἡμιν καταδιδεῖ φρονιματιχιστα. Aristoph. Ranil. act. 4. sc. 21

† See Diodorus Siculus, as above, who expressly declares it.

‡ Herodotus assures us that the Pelasgi, the most ancient inhabitants of Greece, had no more than some general notion of a Superior Power who made the world; but that they knew no name for any divinity, *Euterpe*, cap. 52. A circumstance, which shews that their Gods were not their chiefs or heroes, as *their* names would be better remembered than any thing else relative to them. He informs us that the names of the gods were Egyptian, and brought from Egypt into Greece, *ibid.* cap. 50. & cap. 4.—that altars, statues, and temples were first erected by them; that the prophecying of priests came from thence; and that from them, as the first inventors, the Greeks learned the solemnities of religious worship and festivals. *Ibid.* c. 4. & 58.

founders and heroes are so clear that, with proper allowance for the exaggerations of wonder and panegyrick, they might be reckoned a tolerable History. Nor can this be evaded by saying, that the gods were the earlier, and the heroes the later chiefs and legislators, and therefore better known, as appears from the instance of Bacchus; whose birth was later than many of their founders, in whose mysteries, beside the barbarous, and to the Greeks unmeaning, words used in them *, and which can only be explained from the Oriental tongues, there are many plain marks of their having been derived from foreigners, and, of course, not understood; and this is, in effect, acknowledged by the Greeks themselves †: now for his actions, if we consider him as a Greek hero, the accounts of them bid defiance to all historical explication; and yet we have many tolerably clear and probable accounts, (tho' with some mixture of fiction) of cotemporary events: for instance, by comparing generations, it will appear that Pelops, of whose family, settlement in Greece, &c. we have a tradition, in the main, rational and consistent, and the great facts of which we can even through the medium of fable discern to be true, was coeval with, or one generation prior to, the grandson of Cadmus ‡: and so in others. Besides, how, in the

* Enoi Saboi, Hyes Attes, &c.

† See the Bacchae of Euripides passim. *Diodorus, lib. 1.*

‡ The descendants of Cadmus are,

Polydorus,
Labdacus,
Laius,
Oedipus.

of Pelops,

Pitheus,
Aethra,
Theseus.

Oedipus and Theseus conversed together; if they are to be reckoned coeval, then Pelops was coeval with Polydorus: if, on account of the advanced age of Oedipus, when the intercourse happened, you count him one generation earlier than Theseus, you will make Pelops cotemporary with Labdacus; which seems, indeed, nearer the truth.

name

name of wonder, can it be supposed that so many of their chiefs, or legislators, were female? The number of *goddeses* cannot be accounted for on this system, but easily on the other; for in the Oriental tongues many abstract terms, and names of inanimate things, are *feminine*. How then can general observations concerning the effects of the custom of savage nations deifying their ancestors and worthies, be applicable to the Greeks, whose worship, in all probability, was borrowed, and whose manner of worship and the attributes of whose deities had no internal reason, but had been received by them implicitly? And yet this is a corner stone of Dr. B—'s system, that the earliest chiefs and civilizers of Greece were their gods; that these early chiefs having been singers and dancers, would, when celebrated as gods, be still commemorated as such; and hence he accounts for the oracles having been given in verse.

But his account of the origin of Poetry is the most extraordinary, if I understand him right. To say that men love measure and verse, because they love melody, seems to me completely what the Greeks call *αρω ποταμων*, and implies that voice was used for pleasure before it was used for necessity. The first occasion of uttering sounds, either articulate or inarticulate was, doubtless, some violent emotion, of which sound was at first the effect, and afterward the expression: as, therefore, passion was both the occasion and the object of speech, it will follow, that the words at first were uttered more passionately; that is, in higher tones, as well as more varied ones, than afterwards. Add to this, that in unsettled life, when dangerous accidents and violent escapes were the lot of most men; when the employments, war and the chase, both excited violent emotions, and presented the most awful and striking objects; when the passions were few and uncomplicated, but uniform and strong, the natural affections between the sexes, and for their
 2 offspring.

offspring, partaking of the brutal vehemence; friendships warm from mutual needs and defence, and enmities furious from the excesses of undisciplined revenge; and the reputation for valour would be both to tribes and individuals of the highest importance to their security, and soon become a wild principle of honour; all this, joined to that natural disposition to wonder and astonishment which is always found in raw and unformed minds, would certainly produce the strong and enthusiastic stile, which we call Poetic. It is some proof of this, that, even at this day, to write in poetic stile, is in a good measure to recur to ancient phrases and manner of expression.—Now, I fancy it requires no great skill, either in music or prosody, to perceive that this poetic stile will always bring with it something of poetic cadence and measure; and of this we may see an instance in our neighbours, who have perhaps as little true poetic enthusiasm as any people of genius ever had; yet, whenever they treat poetic matters in prose, that prose is cadence, as they call it: and, as was observed before, the utterance being high, sharp, and canorous, would, of course, require pauses as well as depressions of the voice; and the regular returns of respiration would give these, in the main, something of that regularity which art would afterward imitate and perfect. You know whence † these reflections are, in a good measure, copied; tho' the ingenious author has not expressed himself as fully or clearly as he would have done, had he not thought his notion too clear and evident to be opposed or mistaken. And for the like reason did Longinus express his sense of this matter so concisely.—“ Harmony of a certain kind, and to a certain degree, is to be found even in prose; but more peculiarly belongs to poetry, which makes more frequent use of what affects the passions, and of figured diction, and, above

† Life of Homer.

“ all, of mythology and fictions, which necessarily constitute
 “ and procure to it harmony (*its grand distinction*); and accord-
 “ ingly the ancients, in their discourses of private and familiar
 “ matters, (*it being more passionate, elevated, and allegorical,*
 “ for so we must understand him,) delivered themselves ra-
 “ ther in numbers than in prose.” This great and exalted
 genius supposed that his readers would have taste enough, and
 knowledge enough of nature, to supply what is not expressed
 in this fragment: especially as it is probable he had at full ex-
 plained his opinion elsewhere. Of harmony, as the natural
 concomitant and expression of passion, he speaks — *Περὶ τῆς ὁμο-*
σεύας sect. 39. It is, therefore, hard he should undergo so severe a
 censure from Dr. Brown, as one “ that aims at something
 “ like a reason, but gives us an affirmation instead of an argu-
 “ ment.” Surely the old observation is but too true, * *Mo-*
deste & circumspēto iudicio de tantis viris pronuncian-
du- est, ne—: but I shall not cite the remainder of the sentence, for
 fear it should be thought almost as disrespectful to Dr. B—,
 as he has been to Longinus.

So far then is melody from being the principle to which
 poetry owes its origin, that we find the main parts of it, the
acer spiritus & disjecti membra poetæ, are the natural effect of
 the first wants, and passions, and situation, and (to use the Doc-
 tor's favourite expression) *propensities* of mankind; and that
 these naturally and unavoidably, in a great measure, produce
 the other, the ornament; but by no means the essential of
 poetry—*neque enim concludere versum, dixeris esse satis* †.

And as we must suppose the serious concerns of mankind,
 and the effusions of their passions, to have preceded all amuse-
 ment, and, consequently, the study of harmony, which is a
 mere matter of pleasure; so, when they came to have leisure

* Quintilian, lib. 10. cap. 1.

† Horat.

for amusement, we are not to imagine that with an *a-priori* notion of harmony and measures, they set to adapt their words and tales to it; *Neque enim*, says Cicero *, *versus ratione est cognitus, sed naturâ atque sensu, quem dimensa ratio docuit quid acciderit; ita notatio naturæ & animadversio peperit artem.* We must suppose that, as in children, the grand principle of amusement, where exercise was not concerned, was *imitation*; that they imitated the language of the passions they described; that the cadence which was, as we have seen, a part of the imitation, being one great *ἡδυσμα*, was peculiarly improved, until, at last, it became the *great* distinction (tho', in the judgment of those of most penetration, not the *essential* one) of poetry from prose.

If I am mistaken in making imitation the first, and harmony but the second principle of poetry, I have the honour to err with Aristotle, who expressly lays this down † (*De Poeticâ*, cap. 4.) and with other great philosophers and critics of that country, where poetry more naturally flourished than in any other soil—who make imitation so much the essential of poetry, as sometimes to mention it alone ‡.

Even with regard to the *dance*, where there is less to take off our attention to the time and measure, Aristotle's decision seems the same §, and may be justified by the same reasoning. If we watch in children the first untaught impulses of humanity, we shall observe, that dancing is with them a natural attendant of violent emotion.—They dance for pain;

* In orat. ad Brutum.

† Εὐκατα δὲ γινώσκω μὴ εἶναι τὴν ποιητικὴν αὐταὶ διὰ τῆς, καὶ αὐταὶ φασίαι. Τὸ τι γὰρ ΜΙΜΕΙΣΘΑΙ συμφυρὸς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐστὶ—καὶ τὸ χαίρειν ταῖς μίμησιν παντὶς.—κατὰ φύσιν δὲ οὐτὸ ἡμῶν τοῦ μιμεῖσθαι, καὶ τῆς ΑΡΜΟΝΙΑΣ καὶ τοῦ ρυθμοῦ.—εἰ ἀρχὴς οἱ πιθικωτέραι πρὸς αὐτὰ μέγιστα κατὰ μικρὸν προσηγορίαι ἐκτείνονται τῆς ποιήσεως εἰς αὐτοσχιδίασμα.

‡ Plut. de auct. Poetis.—Plato, passim.

§ In cap. 1. *de Poet.* where he reckons dancing among the arts whose end and principle is imitation.

they dance for joy: they dance for rage, &c. We may observe also, that mimicry is the grand principle on which their amusements are formed.—And we may therefore conclude, that among simple, unformed, human beings, the natural principle of the dance is at first imitation *; and in the second place, as it cannot be totally without measure, when it is become an amusement, and endeavours are used to render it more pleasing, the measure is regulated and perfected.

Dr. Brown's principle, therefore, of the origin of poetry from our love of melody, will not stand the test; and if it be not true itself, will not account for the union of music, poetry, and dancing, in several instances in ancient Greece. Particularly in the most striking one, that of Tragedy, he has failed greatly, in my opinion. You know how I have endeavoured to account for it elsewhere: here it is only my business to point out where I think him mistaken.

If then, in spite of Vossius, Longinus be right in asserting, that the most antient form even of private discourse was rather poetical than prosaic, and more like what we call melody than speaking; we may easily conceive that, where the matter was of more solemn, dignified, or affecting kind, the cadence and utterance would be sure to keep that form, even after it began to be disused in other cases †;—and especially in any set composition, which was learned, and delivered from one to another; as we may observe that children (for I do not see why I should not make as much use of my *little wild beings*, as Dr. B— of his Iroquois) in any set of words which they repeat from one to another, catch a tone as well as the words, and make a song

* And that it is so, appears from some instances in Dr. Brown's so much talked-of song-fest.

† See the passage of Plutarch quoted below, p. 18.

of it. And this will, I think, sufficiently account for ancient histories, laws, exhortations, and oracles, being in verse, and sung, without the painful amusements of Dr. B.'s curious development of a *clouded subject*; that their gods were their "chiefs and legislators; that these chiefs and legislators were "singers and dancers; that, therefore, their gods were thought "singers and dancers; and the oracles, being supposed to be "uttered by them, were therefore sung, in order to be in "character*; that in the Grecian song-feasts, (for all nations "had song-feasts exactly resembling the Iroquois) their heroes "were celebrated; that these tales became their first histories†; "and that exhortations and maxims would abound in those "songs, (*quære*, why?) would by degrees be selected from "thence, and become the standard of right and wrong‡; "therefore their most antient laws also would be in verse."

I say that, tho' his Hypothesis should account for all the phenomena, it does not follow that it is the true; because they are otherwise accounted for as above, and there lie material objections to its being matter of fact.

For, 1st, I have endeavoured to shew that the gods of the Grecians were not their own heroes and legislators, and possibly not those of other people. 2^{dly}, If gratitude or flattery would or did prompt them to deify their dead heroes, it would be not the sages who civilized, but the warriors who fought for, them. — The benefits they would receive from the former would not be so obvious at first sight, and the gentler virtues would not lie so level to the capacity of savages; whereas defence, plunder, and revenge, are advantages of whose worth they would be thoroughly sensible, and prowess and valour are the proper objects of their admiration. So that, unless we can suppose the

* Sect. 4 & 5, artic. 8.

† Artic. 5.

‡ Artic. 6.

characters of warrior and legislator to coalesce (which, from the difference of the talents required for them, and the difference of the purposes they promote, they seem not apt to do) as Dr. B— supposes those of legislator and bard; we should be more inclined to think their gods might have warlike than musical attributes, and to fill their hands, according to Juvenal's humorous representation of the matter, with weapons rather than the lyre.

*Per—Tarpeia fulmina jurat
Et Martis frameam, Cirrhæique spicula vatis,
Per calamos venatricis, pharetramque puellæ.
Perque tuum pater Ægei Neptuni tridentem,
Addit & Herculeos arcus, hastamque Minervæ,
Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria cæli.*

But, thirdly, in truth, this notion of Dr. B—'s, of their gods being stiled Singers and Dancers, is confirmed by so few and slight instances, amid such a variety of deities and attributes as the Greeks had, (many of them unaccountable, because borrowed) that any thing might be proved the same way. I remember a passage in Aristotle full in the teeth of it; where in it is observed, that “the poets never represent Jupiter singing;” and as for Athenæus's quotation from Arctinus or Eumelus, in which the Father of gods and men is spoken of as dancing, it is mentioned as unusual; and I am not clear but it is given as extravagant: at least, the character of that poet should be ascertained, whether serious or burlesque, sensible or absurd, before any thing concerning the whole system of Grecian religion be determined by one quotation at second-hand from him.

* *Ἰουπὶ δὲ ἔστι τῶ ἰσχυρῶς ἐν ὅσῳ καὶ τῶ θεῷ, ὡς καὶ Ζεὺς αὐτὸς ἀδῶν, καὶ ἀδῶν τῶν θεῶν.* Arist. de Rep. lib. 8. cap. 5.

What would you say to a learned commentator, who should form a system, and endeavour to prove that the heroes and divinities of England were those who taught us first the manual arts and trades; and beside the collateral argument he might draw from the insignia and impresses of our most illustrious families bearing depicted the tools with which their founders wrought, should observe, that Sir Richard Blackmore, as he is quoted by Mr. Pope, represents the Almighty as a fuller, a packer, and a baker?

Art. 5. " Their earliest histories were written in verse. The fact is indisputable, but seems not to have been resolved into its true cause." These are Dr. Brown's words. According to the solution given above, by which it appears that verse was naturally the first form of composition, the question should be inverted.—Why their earliest compositions were historical? and as this is universally the case, it will admit of an easy explication:—these best gratify the curiosity as well as vanity, and are most level to the capacity of unpolished people. But I must take notice that the Doctor is very unfortunate in one of his instances to prove the practice universal, according to his principle of its being done thro' an antecedent love and study of harmony and melody. The one I mean is taken from a note in the essay on Homer; but *dum recitat, incipit esse suum*. That ingenious author, in support of his account of the natural origin of poetry in early and barbarous ages, observes that, " in the oldest accounts of the Moors and Spaniards, the Romanzes occur in almost every other page: and the conversations on passionate subjects run (naturally he means, and undesignedly) into a loose kind of verse." (You may observe how little this agrees with Dr. Brown's system.)—He then quotes some passages in Spanish, as instances, and observes in the close, that " these Romanzes are so old, that they are brought by the
" Arabs

"Arabs for the proofs of their histories." Now let us see what Dr. Brown makes of this: "The eldest compositions are in rythm or *rude* verse, and are often cited as proofs of their subsequent history." It is plain he found this instance not much to his purpose, since he has taken such pains to make it sound as if it were.—Not to mention his turning Spanish works into Arabic ones, the word "are," in him, implies directly the contrary to what "often run into" does in the place from whence he copied; and is directly contrary to the truth of the case.

Art. 6. In order to account for the antient laws being written in verse, he asserts, "that the Greek songs and poetic stories being fraught with the great actions of their gods and heroes, *maxims* of exhortation must of course make a part of them; must by degrees be selected, and, in time, appealed to as standards of right and wrong." This is going a great way round for what could be come at directly, upon the principles laid down above.

But why did these ancient songs so eminently and necessarily abound with *maxims* of exhortation, that we must suppose them taken only from thence? Was it because they exhibited the examples of their gods and heroes? For their gods, the accounts concerning them were strange as their notions were imperfect: and for their heroes, the poetic narrations of their actions gratified the curiosity of the hearers, but did not propose their subjects as patterns for imitation, as may appear from many instances in Homer, who is the earliest bard we have. Hear how he speaks of Hercules, in a hymn expressly inscribed to him;

—Πολλὰ μὲν αὐτῷ ἐπέειν ἀτασθαλά.

Who wrought so many furious mischiefs, or injuries.

In like manner of Achilles,

Αἰνεία μὲν ἐροῦσα.

He meditated cruel unworthy deeds.

Art. 7. " Their religious rites were accompanied with
" dance and song." Their religious rites were always festivals,
and every thing amusing, exalting, or exhilarating, would nat-
urally make a part of them; and their celebrations, either pom-
pous or affecting, would naturally run into verse, as we have al-
ready seen. But I would fain know why the Doctor should
suppose this practice to have necessarily arisen from a false reli-
gion, which, as he himself takes notice, made a part of the
true.

Art. 8. The account which Plutarch gives of the oracles
being in verse, and sung, if due allowance be made for the fa-
miliarity of dialogue on an historical point, and for this point
being only incidental, will be found not to deserve so severe a
censure as Dr. B— passes, but to be consistent enough with the
principles already laid down. The design of the tract was to
show that the prosaic stile, in which oracles were given in his
time, was not a sufficient objection to their truth and divine au-
thority. To this purpose he observes, that the God, who makes
use of men as his interpreters and instruments, employs them
in that manner, and to those purposes to which their disposition
and abilities, whether natural, (which he attributes to constitur-
tion and temperament, *ὑφάρκας*, as he calls it) or whether acquired,
were suited: that, accordingly, he prompted men to speak, or
inspired them with conceptions, which they uttered in the
language and stile which their own genius, or that of their
age, led them to use; so that, as poetry was the prevailing stile
of the earlier ages, in which men spoke with fluency and ease,

and in which all subjects, not only religious but philosophical, historical, &c. were treated, it was not to be wondered at that stile should be then used; and, for like reasons, the prosaic one afterward, when that became prevalent. The reasons which Dr. B— cites, as given for the oracles being in verse, are rather on account of the general prevalence of the poetic stile in the first ages; and then there is nothing weak or improper in saying as an historian, that “there was a time which abounded
 “with men of a poetical turn and genius, insomuch that all
 “subjects were delivered poetically;” and what follows amounts to this, That so universal was the practice, that those who were not endued with natural genius, yet, from custom, acquired a habit of poetic composition. And Dr. B— should have taken notice of some words of this passage, which sufficiently hint the critical and philosophical solution, which it was not Plutarch’s business here to deliver at large.—Παν δὲ ΠΛΑΘΟΣ, ὡς ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν, καὶ πρᾶγμα ΣΕΜΝΟΤΕΡΑΣ ΦΩΝΗΣ δομένον. εἰς ποιητικὴν καὶ μουσικὴν ἀγορεύς.

Nor can I at all allow Dr. B—’s objection against the last reason Plutarch assigns, to be of any weight: “Numbers are
 “of great utility to memory; and the ancients had greater
 “need of this than the moderns, because the oracles often re-
 “ferred to persons, places, and things unknown to them.
 “This (says Dr. B—) is not only encumbered with all the
 “difficulties which load the common system concerning the
 “origin of poetic history and laws;” (viz. that it supposes an artful invention for remote purposes to have been made in rude and savage times) “but is contrary to the clear evidence
 “of facts, which assure us, that the earliest poetic oracles were
 “the effects of enthusiasm.” I am not very certain what Dr. B— means: Is it, that the poetic stile and dress given to the answers was the effect of enthusiasm?—Partly; but it was the
 enthusiasm.

enthusiasm of the age :—or, Does he mean that the uttering of oracles in general was not, as is commonly supposed, the crafty establishment of artful men, coming from more civilized countries, who imposed on the credulity of the natives of those more savage regions, where accident or distress had brought them; and, by that means, procured for themselves subsistence, security, and respect? It is scarce possible any thing can be clearer of the kind than Homer's account of this matter. That a number of Cretans, who were on a merchandizing voyage, were by the immediate act of Apollo, who changed himself into a dolphin † for the purpose, driven from their course, in order that he might have them to be his ministers and prophets :

οἱ γὰρ τ' ἀναχτὶ
 ἱερά τε ρεῖωσι καὶ ἀγγέλῳσι θεμισίας
 Φοῖβου Ἀπολλωνος Χρυσάρεω ὅττι κεν ἐπη.

Hymn. ad Apoll.

That they landed at Crissa, and were in great doubt and distress what to do; Apollo appeared to them, told them they should no more return to their own country, but should be his ministers and sacrificers, deliver his oracles, and celebrate him in hymns and Pæans (which, from the custom of their country, they were qualified to do). They asked him how they should subsist in the barren region to which he brought them: he told them they were fools, and bade them be easy as to that matter; for that they should subsist on the daily and abundant sacrifices. For all this, we must suppose the people had their words: and this account, which, thro' the gauze of fable, we perceive to be rational and probable, coming from so great an

† Probably the meaning of this in prose is, that a storm (of which the dolphins are reckoned sure forerunners or attendants) drove them from their course:

authority,

authority, and so near the origin of the tradition, is surely of infinitely more weight than the accounts which Pausanias may be supposed to have picked up from the natives in an age so much lower, when traditions were multiplied or corrupted. I might add to this the express testimony of Herodotus * concerning oracles and other rites being founded by adventurers from more artful and civilized countries; and such men might be supposed to make use of verse either from the practice of their own country, or from a notion of its utility, which is sufficient to justify Plutarch. But let us see and examine Dr. B—'s "clear evidence of facts," which prove oracles the effect of enthusiasm. "Apollo, the God of Music, was their author." With the most humble submission, (as lawyers say to the bench) *clearly* otherwise; for the oracle of Dodona was founded first †, an oracle of Jupiter, with which Apollo had nothing to do. But who was Apollo? Where was he born? (*i. e.* whence was the worship of him brought into Greece?) Was Delos the place? or Ostygia? or Lycia? or Memphis? These questions must be answered before this evidence of facts can be allowed clear. Pausanias informs us, "That Phe-monoe, the sister of Apollo, was the first priestess, and that she delivered her prophetic inspirations with frantic gestures, (*dance*) and in the heroic verse or song." Dr. B— is here guilty of a strange mistake in confounding what Pausanias says of two distinct persons: that Phe-monoe was the *πρωτη προμαντις*, and authoress of hexameter verse, he does say ‡, (tho' even that doubtfully, and allowing that there are authorities for giving the first honour to some Hyperboreans, and the latter to Olen;) but that this Phe-monoe was sister to

* Euterpe, c. 58.—Ετι δε και των μυσων η μαντιση απ' Αργυστη αναγυμνη, &c.

† Herod. *ibid.* c. 52.

‡ Phocidis, cap. 5.

Apollo, he does not in any place or manner allow: it is of a quite different personage; the famous Sibylla Erythræa *, (whom he distinguishes clearly from other prophetesses, and declares her name to have been Herophile)—Of her, indeed, he says, she called herself the sister of Apollo, and the wife and daughter into the bargain; but this only, when she talked in the high metaphoric and enigmatical manner of the prophetic language (for so I understand *μαρτυρεῖται, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ μαρτυρεῖται*); and, therefore, she seems to have meant only to express her intimate intercourse with the god, and the complete inspiration she pretended to: but at other times she owned herself born of a mortal, as Pausanias informs us, and gives us her verses, naming her parents.

The word *μαρτυρεῖται* seems to have been (for I must own it is hard to guess) what Dr. B— interprets “with frantic gesture,” *i. e.* “dance.” Take notice she is said to have pronounced her predictions sitting, as will appear below. I had charity enough to suppose this notable comment was only occasioned by a misfortune incident to very honest gentlemen, *viz.* consulting the translation rather than the original. For the Abbe Gedoy renders it thus; *Mais alors elle parle comme inspirée & comme hors d'elle-même*; which sounds more like Dr. B—’s interpretation: but, as in the preceding line, it is declared that the person in question called herself *tantôt la femme, tantôt la fille, tantôt la sœur d’Apollon*; of two-thirds of which, subversive of his reasoning, Dr. B— takes no notice. I impute his conduct here to his just sense of the dignity of theory and system, superior to authority and facts, which are dull things, and fit to be *made subservient*; and that is easily done by the prudent use of three rules: *viz.* drop what is directly against your purpose; put your own construction on what remains; and what your

* Phocis, cap. 12.

author says of any one, affirm him to say of any other, as is most convenient.

The last rule Dr. B— has observed in quoting Plutarch too, for it is not of Phemonoe, as the Dr. would have it; he says, that she celebrated herself, and boasted she would prophesy after death, and go to the moon, &c.* —but of the same Sibyl whom Pausanias names Herophile, who came to Delphos, and prophesied there sitting on a stone, which was preserved in the temple; in which circumstance Plutarch and Pausanias agree; and which sufficiently shews she was not Pythia, as her seat would have been the Tripod. Dr. B—, therefore, has been unfortunate in attempting to account for the strange custom of Delphi, that the god's vicegerent was a woman, by saying, "the god's own sister first assumed that office;" for as it has been already proved that Phemonoe was not the god's own sister, so neither was she the first woman who was interpreter to an oracle; for the Peleadae, or Peleae, according to Pausanias, exercised that function at Dodona, before Phemonoe did at Delphi †.

To the 11th Article I have little to object: it is most certain that the Grecian melody was simple, and owed a great part of its power to its rhythm and measure. But I must observe, that in tracing this matter, Dr. B— has been rather unlucky in applauding the learned Vossius (whom he speaks of with contempt enough in the main) for a passage wherein that elaborate genius has so grossly erred, that were we not sure of his extensive reading, we should suspect him here of great ignorance. The place I mean is where, in specifying the uses and advantages of the various measures in which the Greek tongue is so happy, he celebrates the Trochæus for its aptness to de-

* Plutarch Car nunc Pythia non reddat oracula carmine. See tom. ii. of his works, Paris edit. p. 398.

† Phocis, cap. 12.

scribe whatever is *soft* and *tender*; the Iambic, as *fierce* and *vehement*; and the Anapæst, as imitating *violent* and *warlike* motions. If, says he, we require numbers that may express *fury* and *madness*, the Anapæst is at hand, &c. Now the man whose own ear could not teach him the use of these measures, may best learn it from the practice of the Greek tragedians, and the various occasions on which they have employed them; and I will give all my knowledge of Greek tragedy for a page of Dr. B—'s book, if it be found that the Trochaic or Anapæstic measures are applied, but in a way widely different from what Vossius pretends; the Anapæst is, for the most part, to scenes where the *pathetic* or the *solemn* predominates, more than could be with propriety delivered in the Iambic, the measure of dialogue and conversation. Instances of the former;—the whole first acts of *Hecuba* and *Troades* of Euripides, except the prologues:—and the prologue of the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, where, when Agamemnon more calmly recounts matter of fact, the measure changes to the Iambic:—the *Monody* in the first act of the *Electra* of Sophocles, &c.—Of the latter,—the opening of the *Perseæ* of Æschylus, and the appearances of gods, as in *Phil. in Hip.* and *El. Euripid.* It is often used between the stanzas of the Chorus; especially in a dialogue with the Chorus in scenes, such as I mentioned above, as in *Prometheus*, where the Chorus first appears; between *Minerva* and the *Eumenides*; between the Chorus and *Antigone*; between the Chorus and *Tecmessa* in *Ajax*.—Sometimes, before or after the choral ode it answers the purpose of just transition, from more lively and varied measures, to the Iambic, or *vice versa*: and it is very often used at the close, I suppose to leave that impression of awe or melancholy which suits the nature of tragedy. From this last rule Euripides seldom varies; Sophocles but once; Æschylus oftener: but the particular reasons might easily be assigned. Nor do I recollect in the whole

Greek tragic theatre, one passage which could have led Vossius into this mistake, of Anapaests being applicable to madness, unless it were in the Hippolitus, where Phædra's reveries are in Anapaest: but if it be considered that these have nothing in them violent or terrible; that they suit the feeble and languid tone of one reduced as she is by a fever, and want of food; and correspond with the melancholy cast and complexion of the whole scene; I believe you will agree with me, that this was no authority for Vossius to found his opinion on, in opposition to such universal practice. I recollect one instance more, I'o's Description of her Frenzy coming on, in the Prom. of Æsch. v. 873. but it may be observed, that the expressions of it, v. 568. are in quite different measures, and that by a sudden change from the Anapaestic, in which she speaks rationally.

For the Trochaic the point is still clearer; that is used for anger and altercation,—as between the brothers in Phœnissæ,—between the Chorus and the Tyrant in Helena, 1636;—for hurry, as Ædip. Colon. 941.—to express rapidity and violence, Heroul. fur. 835.—and for quick succeeding question and answer, especially where surprize is in the case, Orest. 727, &c. and 1506, &c.—Æschyl. Persæ—scene between Atossa and the ghost of Darius. I need not tire you with more instances; but must lament that men who aspire to the character of scholars, will, instead of acquiring true knowledge of antiquity in the delightful originals, condemn themselves to the drudgery of obtaining wrong and imperfect views thro' the dim and false perspective of German critics. Had Dr. B—— rather employed himself in Euripides than Vossius, he might have had credit for his learning, tho' his notions had been wrong; but, by thus following another, he bears the full disgrace of pretending ignorance detected, where

where he is wrong; and raises a suspicion that, even where he is right, his opinion is not founded on acquaintance with the great men of whom he speaks so familiarly, but with their taylor and valets de chambre.

Art. II. " Their songs were of a legislative cast; and being drawn chiefly from the fables or history of their own country, contained the essential parts of their religious, political, and moral systems." As Dr. B— seems to offer this as a proof of his system, it is worth while to examine how far it answers his purpose. It is certain, and has been already fully explained, by more than one author, that poetry owes most of its bewitching influence to our *moral* perceptions; that in all the passions to which ~~it~~ addresses itself, *moral* ideas associated bear a large share, and give them their strength and dignity; and that the honest hearts of plain and unpolished people are most open to these impressions, and best pleased with them: therefore the poets who composed for such an age, supposing their only business and intention had been to please without any view to instruct, would naturally address themselves to those moral principles which had most weight with their hearers. Farther, where tales and narratives were the great business of poetry, the motives and measures of human actions must, of course, find a place; and when the systems of religion, law, and morality, were simple and uncomplicated, and more owing to mens' natural feelings, and rather enforced by habit than any thing else; these would bear a greater share in mens' conduct than in more civilized periods, in which the rules of each kind being not so much of mens' own making, tho' more refined and complicated, are less observed and more evaded; so that, supposing the essential parts of the absurd religious traditions, the imperfect attempts at polity, and the simple rules of con-

duct betwixt man and man, which obtained among the earlier Greks, are to be found in their poetry; what will follow from hence, but that their bards represented life truly and naturally, and knew their business, which was to *please*. That this, and not instruction or civilization, was the business of the bards, can I think be made very clear. Orpheus, indeed, and Amphion, who took the savages from their woods, and endeavoured to humanize them, did employ their eloquence (of which there was then no species but poetry) to persuade them to live together sociably, and without injuring each other, and to worship the Gods. They had something else to do than to recount tales for pleasure; and there was not much among the brutes worth recounting: but as soon as the conveniencies of life began to abound, and they began to seek amusement, one of their first and greatest pleasures was in the soothing tales, ΘΕΑΚΤΗΡΙΑ, of their bards.

It is in the light of pleasing and charming, not sage or useful, we find them considered. ΕΠΙΗΡΟΝ αἰδῶν.—(*Valde amabilem, valde gratum*; which I take to be a truer interpretation than the other, *Harmonice canentem, vel valde harmonicum*), Odyss. θ. 471.

— δέδωκεν γὰρ ἱμεροεντὰ βροτοῖσι·

Τὸ δ' ἀμείνον μεμασιν ἀκνέμεν ὅππότε αἰδῶν. p. 519.

— Τὼ γὰρ πα θεὸς περὶ δῶκεν αἰδῶν.

ΤΕΡΠΙΝΗΝ ὅππῃ θυμὸς ἐποτρυνῶσιν αἰδῶν. θ. 45.

The reason why he was welcome is given,

— οὐ καὶ ΤΕΡΠΙΝΗΣΙΝ αἰδῶν*. Odyss. p. 385.

And his excellence was to be,

ἩΔΙΣΤΟΣ αἰδῶν, — καὶ τῷ ΤΕΡΠΙΝΗΣΘΕ μάλιστα.

Hymn. ad Apol. 169. 40.

* Aristotle, from this passage, which he quotes *lib. 8. cap. 3. de Rep.* makes an like observation.

Even

Even in the description and panegyric of this character given by Hesiod, as Dr. B— observes (Sect. 6. Art. 15.), the highest he says of him is that *ΓΑΥΚΕΡΗ ΑΥΔΗ*, sweet is the voice that flows from his mouth; and that he is able to assuage grief, and make men forget their woes by means of *ΙΜΕΡΟΕΣΣΑ* *αἰσθη.* Hesiod. Theog. 96, &c. And as for his ranking the bard next to kings, I can quote him two passages where he is ranked with carpenters. No man, says honest Eumæus in the *Odyssey*, is desirous of receiving an idle stroller into his house, but wishes to entertain either a diviner or a physician, (no offence to the faculty, I am told they stroll in Greece at this day, and go about the streets crying *ἰατρὸν*, *ἰατρὸν*,) or a carpenter, or a bard. Nay, Hesiod himself tells you, that a potter envies a potter; a carpenter a carpenter; a beggar envies a beggar; and a bard a bard. Plato is very full in shewing, from the accounts of the manner in which Homer and Hesiod were treated, as well as from the nature of their poems, that these bards, according to the character of a bard which they describe, and which tradition recorded of them, were by no means considered, nor ought to be, in that respectable light in which Dr. B— labours to place them; of, next to law-givers, sage instructors, and of use to the community. You may read the passage at large in the 10th book, *De Republicâ* *. Do you chuse as you will; but, for my part, in reasoning on a point of Greek antiquity, I am rather more swayed by the authority of Plato than of Dr. B—.

But the Dr. tells us it was in *Republics* the dignity of the bard's character was maintained; and that the accounts Homer gives us of this condition and character, so early as the time:

* Page 559. Stephens' edition of Serranus, printed 1578:

of the Trojan war, are taken from *despotic* governments. This to be sure is easily said; but it is as easily answered, that the governments of that time were neither one nor the other †. I do not remember a *Republic* established until much later, and *Despotism* was a thing unknown ‡. Their simplicity inclined them to take the shortest and easiest way, that of trusting power to one; their spirit would never suffer that one to tyrannize for any length of time, so as to induce a change of manners. As therefore the business of the bards, in the periods after Orpheus and Amphion, as far as we can learn, does not appear to have been “ assisting the magistrate in his high task of governing the people;” so neither does it appear from any thing Dr. B— has observed, that they proposed to themselves the instructing or reforming of mankind: but each, like Terence, long after,

Id sibi negotiū credidit solum dari

Populo ut placerent quas fecisset fabulas.

And to do this they must surprise and affect; take hold of the preconceived notions and associations of ideas, and dwell on subjects the most interesting to their audience; that is, their songs would be filled with the gods and heroes, and ceremonies, and customs, and rules of right and wrong, of that equally unrefined and uncorrupted race in these good old days, to whom they were addressed.

Therefore, when the Doctor asserts that their songs were of a legislative cast, the words are either used in a very

† See Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws, lib. 11. cap. 11. & Aristot. de Rep.

‡ Α. Πολις γαρ ουκ εσθ' ἥτις ἀνδρῶν εσθ' ἐνθ'.

Κρ. Ου του κρατουμένη η πολις νομιζεται;

Α. Καλῶς ερημης γ' αἶσιν συ γης αρχης μανθῶ, Soph. Antig. v. 478.

vague or lax sense, or the assertion does not hold. He himself acknowledges, that in Homer, for instance, "the religion, politics, and manners of ancient Greece, are delivered with all their imperfections." Had his work been *legislative*, his business would have been to deliver a more perfect and improved system in each kind: but this does not seem once to have entered his thoughts. He recites actions not framed for the purpose of a moral, but as they did or might happen; speaks in his own person as little as possible; and what is in the mouths of the actors, is plainly not intended for any purpose of artful instruction, but is so much the pure dictate of Nature, that his hearers might think, had they been the person, they would have spoken and acted just so; and where he narrates in his own person, he neither (as has been observed already) gives the action he relates for a pattern of imitation, nor does he lay open the heinousness of it; but utters his approbation or dislike, if at all, in such a short and simple manner, that his hearers might seem to think these their own sentiments, as in all probability they were. Such is the work which Horace, without Dr. B—'s leave, commends as displaying moral beauty and deformity, (*quid pulchrum, quid turpe*), and the natural consequences of these actions, (*quid utile, quid non*) more fully and clearly than the porch and academy; and surely with as good reason as I would be justified in saying, that Mr. Boyle was a greater natural philosopher than Descartes, and that natural knowledge was more promoted by his collections of experiments, than by the airy hypothesis from which the other built his system downwards. Just and (what Aristotle observes to be the excellence of poetry above history) *universal*, views of human life, and of the motives and consequences of men's actions, are in ethics what experiments are in physics; the premises from whence

we are to conclude, by comparison and induction. And it is in this light entirely that Horace considers the works of Homer, as appears from the tenor of his epistle in which he seems to think his assertion might startle; *Cur ita crediderim, nisi quid te detinet, audi*; and goes on to shew how these just accounts of life and manners may be applied by every person, and brought home to his own business and bosom: and no wonder a man of the world should prefer this to the paradoxical and futile subtlety of those "drones that mould in idle cell," the Stoics and Academics, whose weak reasonings and useless systems in morals you and I have been obliged to spend too much time in learning, not to be thoroughly sensible of their worthlessness.

I find I have been obliged in this, and two or three more instances, to act as champion for the great men of antiquity whom Dr. B— attacks: and this is so flattering to my vanity, that I am sorry to engage on other ground, and endeavour to shew that he exalts another great poet (who certainly deserves very high commendations) a little too high in his character. Pindar, the immortal Pindar! he is not content with considering as a great and sublime genius, who could, *multâ levatus aurâ*, soar to the clouds, and bear the souls of his hearers with him, unless he makes him a demi-legislator too, and attributes all the honour which were paid his talents, to this supposed dignity of his character and employment. How far his taking hire * for writing his Odes, a practice he himself avows and labours to justify, is consistent with this, I know not. Nor am I strictly satisfied of the truth

* According to the well known story which gave occasion to the passage alluded to by Horace, in

Centum potiore signis

Munere donat.

of Dr. B—'s assertion—"That in his songs no vices or imperfections, either of gods or men, are applauded or palliated, nor ever recited but to be condemned." No? what does he think of the decent adventure of Neptune and Pelops, which Pindar says he recites in honour of the gods? But I am aware it will be said this is according to the principles of the Grecian legislation: but still this single passage should have hindered the Doctor from pronouncing so fully, that all actions are praised or censured in him according to their influence on publick happiness.

"The intent of these songs was to inspire his countrymen with a love of glory and virtue. To this great end he animated them not only by the example and praise of the victors in the Olympic Games, but ascended into past times, and drew from thence the shining acts of gods and heroes, &c."

All his songs then were, according to Dr. B—, of this which he calls a *legislative cast*. I should be glad to know how he would reduce the elegies under this description, which, it is well known were one of the four species of poetry in which Pindar excelled.

Flabit sponsa juvenem raptum

Plorat,

T. — Hor. Ode 2. lib. 4.

As for the Odes that remain, they are in honour of different victors, composed at their particular desire, and for their pay, as he himself acknowledges in a passage that does not much confirm Dr. B—'s notion. "The former poets, (says he in the beginning of his second Isthmian) employed their songs, as inclination led them on love and beauty;" (those who consider this passage as it lies in the original, will be apt to think that there were before Pindar more poets than Anacreon, whose songs were no way legislative); "for the muse

" was

“ was not yet, continues Pindar, become covetous or mercenary ; but now she permits to observe that most true saying of the Argive (Aristodemus the Spartan) Money, money is the man.” But whatever was the author’s intent or motive for writing them, as they are panegyric, they must abound with reflections on what was laudable, or the contrary ; and with pictures and recommendations of what that age and nation reputed *virtue* : and since the subject of a victory at the Games was narrow and hackneyed, and required to be varied by digressions, what could be more obvious than fables built on the current traditions, which at once struck the imagination, soothed the vanity, and excited the awful respect of the hearers ? Yet when, first he composed odes, he was not sensible himself, that “ the main intent of his composition was “ the praise of his country’s gods and heroes : ” for we are expressly told by Plutarch †, that in his first Ode he wrote without mixing fables at all, until an elder and more experienced artist, Corinna, told him how necessary they were.— He followed her advice ; and probably his observing the success of it, gave occasion to that celebrated reflection in the first Olympian (which you know was by no means the first of his writings ; for the tenth Pythian is eight years prior to it,) concerning the power of fiction. “ Tales, says he, ornamented and variegated with fictions, allure the hearts of “ men more than truth.”

Καὶ ποῦ τι, καὶ βροτῶν φρενα,

Ὑπερ τὸν ἀλὲν λόγον,

ΔΕΔΑΙΔΑΜΕΝΟΙ ἱερῶν Πτοχίλοις

Ἐξαρτῶν τι μῦθον.

Where you see ornament and variety are, according to him, the effects of fiction, which make it so generally charming. Yet

† Bellone an Pace clariore fuerint, Athenienses. Tom. 2. Paris edit. 1624.

this liberty of digressing into the praises of the country of the person who is the occasion of his song, or the heroes that country produced, tho' the propriety of it be greater than appears at once to a modern reader, and is pointed out in some instances by the commentators *, from whence we may suppose it in more; still seemed to Pindar himself to need an apology; which he has indirectly offered in more than one place, as you may observe, 5th Isthmian, lin. 28—31. and 6th, lin. 27—30. I conclude, therefore, that neither the poet's motive nor intention, his moralizing, his fables, nor his digressions, give occasion for stiling his songs legislative, in any other sense than all serious composition that ever was, or will be, may be stiled so. Dr. B— indeed, seems so resolved to dignify this prince of lyric poets at any rate, that but for some reasons I should believe Pindar was his favourite author: the very chair in which he sat at Delphos, as that dull eye-witness Pausanias relates †, which those niggard Greeks could afford of no better materials than *iron*, the Doctor has generously, at his own expence converted, into beaten *gold* ‡. The true sign of a great genius, according to an elegant modern, is, that every thing he touches he turns to gold: which polite remark I chuse to apply, rather than any thing the rude ancients have said about Midas.

The three Greek tragedians, says the Doctor, are the last of this illustrious catalogue of *legislative* bards. Wo is me! how ill have I been treated by three people for whom I had a particular regard! Notwithstanding the pains I have taken to be acquainted with them, yet in the most private conversations I

* If Dr. B—— thought these commentators unworthy his perusal, he might, from the translation and remarks of the elegant and learned Mr. West, have acquired a much juster notion of Pindar than he has given his readers.

† Phocicis, cap. 24.

‡ Sect. 6. art. 17.

had, they never gave me a hint of their being *legislators*, or *legislative writers*; and I should take it very unkindly of them, if I did not find they had been as reserved on this point to every one else, except Dr. B—. Solon, who, I hope, will be allowed to have understood legislation, does not seem to have had that high idea of the tragic writers, as *useful servants of the state*, which Dr. B— assures us, was the general one: for Plutarch informs us, he expressed a great dislike of their art, and apprehension of its public ill consequences to Thespis †. But what has Dr. B. learned from the tragic poets that persuades him of the truth of his assertion? “They hold forth the leading principles of the Greek religion, politics, and morals; and their subjects are the Grecian gods and heroes.” I shall allow these to be excellent arguments to prove not only this, but any other point, if the Doctor or any body for him will inform me what else could have been found in them, if they had not been legislative; what subjects, what manners, what notions were known to the Greeks, or would have been thought worthy of attention by that self-valuing race, whose contempt and ignorance of the affairs and manners of other nations, whom they stiled indiscriminately Barbarians, ran an equal pace.

But, to deal candidly and generously with the Doctor, I shall help him to a stronger argument in favour of this notion than any he has produced. Aristophanes, in his droll contention between Æschylus and Euripides, makes the former exact from the latter a concession that the reason poets are to be honoured is,

Δεξιότης και νοθεσιας, οτι βελτιους τε ποιουμεν
Τους ανθρωπους εν ταις πολισει.

Ran. act. 4. sc. 2.

† See his Life.

for

for their ingenuity, salutary admonitions, and bettering their fellow-citizens. On this Æschylus joins issue with him, and compares the bravery of the Athenians in his time, to which he pretends to have contributed, with their degeneracy in the days of Euripides, which he charges on him, as having in part caused. But let it be observed, that a buffoon always places things in that light which is of most advantage for his satire; and Aristophanes thus contrives to give a severe lash to his own cotemporaries: that it appears he was determined to decry Euripides at any rate, or by any means; and therefore fixes on that as the only excellence of poetry in which, according to his notions, that poet was most deficient, the moral of his pieces: that it should seem, from the pains he takes to establish this criterion of his, that it was not the commonly received one; and that his applications of it are merely ludicrous: and lastly, that no two sources of invidious criticism are more open and easy, than blaming, on the one hand, useful writings for want of elegance; and, on the other, decrying more artful and elegant writers as useless.

But we shall have more to do with the tragic writers presently.

In the meantime, I have a few loose observations to make on the two remaining articles of this section, concerning the use of music in Grecian education, and its extensive influence and power; which you must take without much order, for I have not spare time enough to methodize them.

Tho' it should appear that the Greeks regarded music as a necessary part of liberal education; is this unaccountable exceptive, suppose poetry to be comprehended under it, and their laws, religion, and manners, intimately connected with it? The moderns consider *dancing* as a necessary accomplishment; one author entitles his book, on the subject, *The Rudiments of*

genteel Education. And even the abstracted Locke, and Rousseau, the defier of all prejudices but his own, both insist on it, in their treatises on Education. Is it for any strict connexion it has with our laws, religion, and moral principles? I fancy Dr. B—, adventurous as he is in asserting, and dexterous at proving, will hardly say so. May we not then conjecture the cases were in some measure alike? that the associations of ideas, which give rise to mens' different customs and estimation of things, are not always to be traced easily; but that whatever is in general esteem, and is the employment or amusement of persons of character, will become an important part of good education: the being able to share or promote the innocent entertainment of good company is necessary in order to be admitted there; and consequently is one powerful means of improving the understanding, promoting the social affections, and softening the manners*: that speculative men, who set themselves to improve the education of their country, could not entirely divest themselves of its notions; and as these arise from association, we cannot always discern the connexion of ideas in them: that it was most reasonable for them not to think of banishing the established form of education, but to give directions how it might be best pursued and adapted to the noblest purposes; and this will sufficiently account for Plato's giving directions concerning the subjects of poetry, where he was treating of musical education: that the fine genius of Plato inclined him to a florid enthusiasm, which makes it dangerous to argue too strictly from him on so delicate and fanciful a subject: that he sometimes talks the same fustian

* This is particularly insisted on by the historian in his account of the effects of music on the Arcadians; that the young people of both sexes were brought together by means of it, in large assemblies, which contributed to humanize and polish off the ferocity, which, without this, is apt to grow on us.

(for I can stile it no better) with his noble scholar, Lord S—, of applying numbers and harmony to life, actions, virtues, &c. *: that where he talks a little more soberly, we may understand him: that every thing which contributes to refine the taste and imagination is, according to his philosophy, as well as that of some others, one step toward refining the passions and forming the moral sentiments, as we may observe his imitator insists, at large, on the influence of the fine arts toward forming his καλοκαγαθός, his virtuous gentleman. I therefore do not think it necessary, where Plato speaks of the effect of music on the soul, that we must suppose him to mean *music acting by the medium of poetry*. And I am confirmed in this by observing that the severe Aristotle, who, as Dr. B— acknowledges, wrote after a separation had taken place; yet in speaking of music as a part of education (where it is plain he uses the word in the same sense we do) seems to treat the matter the same way †.

Nor does it appear from Plato that Music, in the common acceptation of it, included poetry and dance; but rather the contrary, even from the passages Dr. B— has produced. By the care Plato takes to give notice that when he speaks of music he includes the subject, words, or song ‡, it seems he was apprehensive he would not be understood as including these, if he left his readers to themselves; and by the passage quoted from the Alcibiades § it appears, that the world did not know of the word used in this sense; that is, that this was not the popu-

* In Protag. tom. 1. page 326. of Serranus's by Stephens; and in Locke's, tom. 2. p. 188.

† *De Rep. lib. 8. cap. 5.* Virtue, he lays down, consists in being rightly pleased or displeased; and then goes on to shew the use of music to give us habits of being rightly pleased, and improving our faculty of judging by suggesting proper objects.

‡ See Dr. B—, sect. 5. art. 12.

§ Ibid. sect. 5. art. 1.

lar sense, but the one Socrates used the word in: so that Dr. B— must be sent back to his Logic to learn the difference between *definitiones in usum proprium*, & *usum communem*, if he should pretend to insist on this.

But it was natural for the popular terms to be distinct, when the arts of Poetry and Music had been so long "separate before Plato; so long, I say.

I wish Dr. B— had been pleased to tell us, with the least degree of precision, what he means by *early* and *late* periods of antiquity: for then we could judge whether his assertions were valid or no. But at present, when he says that "what we call *instrumental music*, was a thing never held in esteem till the "later periods of antiquity; *" his assertion seems to have the property mentioned by Hudibras of a particular stile of writing, that it is neither true nor false. But I have with some attention discovered a passage, where he speaks of a particular period as an early one, in which I will prove that a separation had taken place. In a passage, for which he cites Strabo's name, he speaks of something that was done after the Crissæan war, as done in *ancient times* †. Now if any one will look into a chronological table, he will find this war ended in, or about the second year of the 48th Olympiad, which agrees with the date Pausanias expressly mentions of contests in instrumental music unaccompanied by song, being established at Delphi; to wit, the third year of the 48th Olympiad (from whence all the chronologers date the Pythiads). In that year the Amphyc-tions established prizes for singing to the harp, *κιθαρῳδίας*, as formerly; but added contests of singing to the flute, *αυλοδίας*; and of the flute by itself, *καὶ αὐλῶν*; and he mentions the victors in these two distinct contests, *αυλοδῶν*, Echembrotus the Arcadian,

* See Dr. B— sect. 5. art. 1.

† Sect. 6. art. 19.

and Sacadas the Argive, *ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐλοῖς* * But if this should not be early enough to satisfy the Doctor, Pausanias, in his history of the Pythian contentions, will tell him of one Eleutheres, whom he mentions before Hesiod, that gained the prize for mere execution, *ἡδὺ φέρουντα*, singing a composition not his own. He will tell him likewise, that Hesiod did not play on the harp; so that there was a separation of the poet's and musician's character very early. I do not pretend that the arts were not conjoined in the first and unimproved ages; it is the case of all kindred arts in such periods: but I must insist that this union of them was not so strict, universal, and lasting, as Dr. B— seems inclined to make us believe.

The power which Music obtained over the minds of men in Greece the Doctor very justly, in part, attributes to *association* †: but this is in effect owning, that it is in a great measure unaccountable; for association being the union of ideas, which have no natural connexion or dependence, the whole progress of a people's manners and usual course of ideas must be known before we can pretend to give more than remote and general guesses how independent ideas came to be joined in their minds; and as the Greeks, especially, were wedded to their own notions, and held the rest of the world in contempt, it were no wonder if they had associations widely different from the common sense of mankind, and if the effect and power of particular sounds and instruments was very great. They were besides, as far as we can judge from the accounts of them and from their writings, a people of lively imagination, strong passions, and elastic nerves: all this will go a good way toward a general account of this

* Pausan. Phoc. cap. 7. See also the passage from Strabo, which is quoted at large below.

† Sect. 5. art. 13.

matter. To this let us add, that the stories we have of the surprising effects of harmony, must be understood with some allowance; for this people, and those who wrote for them, were somewhat given to the marvellous *, and loved to place things in the *strongest light*. Nor, indeed, can we much wonder at this disposition in them, of which we see here so strong instances, in a work assuming the air of philosophical enquiry and speculation. The two instances of *Music's wonderful might*, which Dr. B— has chosen to account for, in order to shew his skill in solution, he has raised into greater wonders than they ever appeared to any one in the dull originals. That a *musician* †, by the power of his art, could keep a wife faithful to her husband, seems strange: the word Musician was favourable to the Doctor's system, and afforded him room for explaining. But had he given us it as it is in Homer, that Agamemnon, after setting out for Troy, had left many strong injunctions on his bard, his poet, ~~and~~ ‡, to watch his comfort, and that Ægysthus could not succeed until he removed him from his palace, this would not have appeared so new, nor have been a great proof in Dr. B—'s favour; for by his profession such an one must have had his mind stored with persuasive arguments and enforcing examples on the side of Virtue; but this was not all: Perhaps it was of more importance that he could constantly amuse her innocently, and prevent the return of impertinent thoughts, which might, in that climate especially, be apt to intrude into the mind of a lady obliged to live without a husband; and this Athenæus insists on §. But why should we not also suppose that this faithful

* *Grecia mendax audet in historia.*

† Dr. B—, sect. 5. art. 19.

‡ Παρ' γὰρ αὐτῶν καὶ αἰδοῦσθαι αὐτὸν ὡς πολλὰ ἐπιτάλλει

Ἀχιλλεύς τρωὶν δὲ κίον εἰρυνεῖν αἰοῖται.

Odyss. γ.

§ Deipn. lib. 1. cap. 12.

But now, when we remember what instrument the musician played on, and how possible it was to sing with it, it is entertaining to hear the grave and pompous descant of Dr. B— on it. “Tis plain that when the historian tells us that the musician conquered the young debauchees by an application of the Dorian mode, he means to signify, That the melody was accompanied by a poetic exhortation suited to the numbers; and this could be no other than a lesson of modesty and temperance, which being conveyed by the pleasing vehicle of melody and song, addressed to those who, by the tenor of their education, must feel its force, and given by one whose profession they had been taught to reverence” (*cibicina*, says Quintilian) “could hardly fail of its designed effects, unless their intemperance had prevented all attention.”

In tracing the progress of the arts in the sixth Section, the Doctor has advanced some things which I have already in some measure discussed, as in Art. 15. and others not at present the object of your attention or mine. But the first point of which I shall take notice, is in the 17th Article. “Hymns or Odes, says he, were composed, &c. This species of song hath in the way of pre-eminence, and beyond any other, gain’d the title of *Lyric Poetry*,—from its nature it must have arisen at first—must have been first moulded into form, &c.”—“Must, says the Proverb, with respect to common life, is for the King:” in matters of speculation, this word is only for the mathematician; it is not in determining on the operations of fancy that we are to use it. Plausible as the Doctor’s account here seems of the origin of Lyric Poetry, there lie material objections to its being matter of fact. That hymns did arise very early, we are sure. Some of the earliest pieces of Greek poetry that remain are of this form, and the fragments of others seem to denote the same of them: but that

this is the same thing as saying Odes or Lyric Poetry (as those terms are understood) was of such origin, is by no means to be allowed; for the hymn of the ancient form is widely different from the Lyric Ode as we call it. It is, first, constantly in Hexameter; and I appeal to all who know any thing of Poetry, whether in any language where there are

Descriptæ vices operumque colores,

the ode is not universally distinguished by its being in varied measures, or shorter ones than Heroic. 2dly, The stile of these old poems, as far as we can judge from these of Homer which remain, and the fragments which are accidentally preserved of others, is of more settled and graver majesty than that of the Lyric kind; and the plan more regular, and, for the most part, narrative; whence some derive the name from *ὑμνῳδία*, to record*. Nor can these distinctions be attributed to Homer's peculiar genius; for in those poems of the same denomination of Callimachus, written so many ages after, we find the same; and it is probable he wrote in imitation of the antient poems of that name and order: the same may be observed of Theocritus's hymn to the Dioscuri. The poems of this class which go under the name of Orpheus, are somewhat different from the others, principally consisting of mysterious and solemn and strange invocations and addresses, and should seem were intended for the mysteries, or for the initiated particularly; but otherwise, and especially in the measure, they agree with those of Homer. And indeed I do not remember any fragments of the most antient poetry of Greece, which are not in this measure.

* Procli Crestomath. apud Photium.

All I would infer from this is, that Dr. B— has been in a little too much haste to come at his origin of Tragedy by deducing it from an union of the Epic species with the *hymnal* (which he, to answer his purpose, confounds in the *ode*); and as both these were of early origin; he would have us infer that the union of them was so too*: whereas the choral ode of the Greek tragedy is for the most part strictly Lyric, and so very different from the hymn, that we might draw an argument from thence to prove the origin of tragedy no earlier than the time generally reputed; since, as far as I can find, there are no accounts of Lyric poetry much earlier than Thespis.

But such an argument as this, tho' if dressed up with proper plausibility and force, and offered with that confidence which sometimes is, and often seems the result of thorough knowledge and penetration, it might be sufficient with some people to support a new system, and bear down all authority of historians, and reasonings of those who had made such a matter their particular study, I am far from offering to you as conclusive; and if there were no better reason to convince me of the late invention of tragedy, I should scorn to wield so weak and edgeless a weapon, tho' fully sufficient to cut and tear a cobweb hypothesis.

But any man may easily conceive that where *the learned of all times* are united in an opinion (which Dr. B— allows they are in ascribing the rise of tragedy to Thespis), there are not wanting arguments to support it. And had that gentleman justly estimated the proportion he bears to so many learned men, it would have taught him to suppose, that possibly they were determined in their opinion by more arguments than he knew; and that perhaps they had considered, and upon ma-

* See sect. 6. art. 19.

mature deliberation rejected, the objections he has only renewed: except one, to which, indeed, I must do the justice to say, I believe it never came into any head but his own. Is it not a pleasant thing for a man to assert that Horace, Laetius, &c. who had so many more writings and monuments to learn from than we have, were ignorant or mistaken in a point of Greek history? And why? Because they relate a matter of fact which does not agree with his conjectures: for this is the sum of what Dr. B— urges to set aside their testimony. “All this *, says he, is in contradiction to the workings of nature,” (*i. e.* to his account of them) “and without proof” (Q. who told him it was without proof?) “supposes that to be a casual invention in a particular instance, which was indeed the natural progress of passion.” And again, at the close of this article †, “Tis probable” * * * “This must necessarily” * * * “And hence the opinion seems first to have arisen, that Thespis was the inventor of this species—” At this rate it is easy to form any system, and bid defiance to all refutation.

But as this point of the origin and date of tragedy, is the one in which I most particularly differ from the Doctor, and in which his sentiments and reasonings are most extraordinary, I think it necessary to state the question, and lay the evidence fairly down.

Every school-boy knows that, before the time of Thespis, there was a kind of composition called *tragodia*, or goat-song, which, as is generally supposed, was no more than a hymn in honour of Bacchus; and that this word, in its original import, has nothing of the meaning which it afterwards bore, and the only one it bears among us; so that when a passage in a Greek book, translated literally, seems to declare any thing

* Sec. 6. art. 19.

† Note, I here lay the bare form of this arguing before you, without the matter of it, that you may the better perceive it.

about the history of *Tragedia*, we must be sure that the word is used in our sense for *dramatic imitation of the more solemn and affecting kind*, before we can conclude any thing from it; the question being not, who first sung and danced in honour of Bacchus; but by whom, and when the first sketch of dramatic representation was introduced. Horace tells us that, according to general tradition, it was by Thespis.

*Ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse camæna
Dicitur, & plaustis vexisse poemata Thespis
Qui canerent agerentque.*

His invention, we are told, was no more than “the introduction of one actor, in order to allow some intervals of rest to the Chorus; which, before his time, was the sole performer of the entire entertainment.” These are the words of Laertius: ΕΑ ΤΗ ΤΡΑΓΩΔΙΑ ΠΡΩΤΕΡΟΝ ΜΕΝ ΜΟΝΟ ὁ ΧΟΡΟΣ ΔΙΔΡΑΜΑΤΙΖΕΤΑΙ, ὡς ὁρᾷς, ἕνα ὑποκριτὴν ἐξέρχον, ὑπὲρ τοῦ διαπαύεσθαι τοῦ Χοροῦ; so that, by the bye, if Dr. B— knew of this passage, he ought not so much to have censured Dacier for *roundly affirming* this, as Laertius, who affirms it as roundly to the full, and whom Dacier affirms after. Plutarch, in his life of Solon, informs us, that the alteration Thespis made was quite a new thing, and attracted the multitude by its novelty, ΔΙΕ ΤΗΝ ΝΕΟΤΗΤΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΠΟΛΛΟΥΣ Ἀγούσθαι ΤΟΝ ΠΡΑΓΜΑΤΟΣ. In what the novelty consisted we gather from what follows: That Solon went and saw him *act*, ὑποκρινομένου; asked him after the spectacle was over, whether he was not ashamed to lye so greatly, ΤΗΛΙΚΑΥΤΑ ΠΑΙΔΕΟΜΕΝΟΣ; to carry lying to such a length in the presence of such a number: and when Thespis answered that there was no great harm in saying and *acting* such things, ΛΑΛΕΙΝ ΤΙ ΤΟΙΑΥΤΑ, ΚΑΙ ΠΡΑΤΤΕΙΝ, in sport, and for amusement; Solon with vehemence replied, that such an amusement, if approved and applauded, would soon find a place in those serious affairs which require the strictest adhe-

rence.

rence to truth. It appears sufficiently from the tenor of the story, that what Solon objected to was new and unusual; for why should he ask such a question, if the thing was customary? or how could he say that such would *soon* be the effect, if the practice had been long established? It could not be therefore merely recounting fabulous stories; for that had been the business of poets down from Homer: it must be therefore what the word *πρᾶξις* points out; his outlying all his predecessors, by pretending to be the hero they knew he was not; by assuming a personated character; and, accordingly, both Plutarch and Laertius * immediately explain what Solon said, by telling you of the conduct of Pisistratus, and his acting a part in the market-place, which happened just after: and to which Solon applied his observation on Thespis.

Dramatic representation was therefore the novelty which Thespis introduced; and accordingly we find him declared the author of tragedy almost universally. Dioscorides, in the epigram published by Stanley, ascribes the invention to him solely and intirely.—*Θιόσκορος ἐπιγράμματα τοῦτο.*—And so well known was this that the Arundelian marbles give the date of it; and by the best reading and supplying by which they are made out, say, *πρῶτος ἐδίδαξεν*. Suidas, where he speaks (it † should seem) his own sense of the matter, tells us that Thespis was the first who introduced τῆς τραγικῆς, which more certainly agrees with our meaning of the term.

It were needless to add to these the testimonies of Clement of Alexandria, *lib. 1. Strom.* who, in reckoning the inventors of different kinds of poetry, tells us Thespis the Athenian invented (πρῶτος) tragedy; and of the ancient Grammarian whose treatise is prefixed to Donatus's Terence: *Quamvis retro prisca volventibus reperiatur Thespis tragædiæ primus inventor—Homerus tamen etiam his exempla præbuit.*

* Lib. 1. seg. 59, in Vita Solonis. † Suidas in Phrynicus.

Now, having stated the historical fact, let us see what the Doctor says: "From an union of these two kinds (the Epic, "or narrative, and the Hymnal") (which he falsely confounds with the Lyric) "a certain rude outline of tragedy arose" (naturally I suppose him to mean, and early in the savage state, or in the first period of civilization); "for when a bard sung the "great or terrible achievements of a hero or a god, the "surrounding audience, fired to enthusiasm, and already prepared by a correspondent education, would naturally break "forth into the raptures of a *choral song*."

To this I have a few objections or difficulties to urge, 1st, I would fain know, if this be the natural origin of tragedy, and how it came to pass that in all nations, except Greece, the more pathetic drama is without a chorus at all? 2dly, If the rise and progress of Tragedy be so extremely natural, since every thing that is natural is universal, how came this species of poetry to arise or be cultivated in Athens only*? which that it was, we have Plato's word. 3dly, From the Doctor's account we must conclude, that one related or acted, and the Chorus subjoined expressions of emotion suitable to the subject; but unfortunately it is declared as fully as any thing can or need be, that the antient *tragedia* consisted of a chorus alone, and without an actor. For this we have the testimony not only of Laertius, as quoted above, but of Athenæus, who mentioning that the satyric poem antiently consisted entirely of chorus, adds, "as did also "the tragedy of that time, for which reason, continues he, "they were both without actors†." 4thly, It will likewise follow from the Doctor's system, that the choral part would be, of course, an appendage only to the episode; and the chorus would be but a supposed spectator of the action, or a subordi-

* In *Laches*. See also Plutarch: *Bella an pace clariores fuerint Athenienses*.

† *Εὐνομία δὲ καὶ Εὐταμία ἡμεῶν πόλεως τοῦ παλαιῶν καὶ χοροὶ καὶ οἱ τοῦ τραγῳδία, δὲ καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο.* Deinn. lib. 14. p. 635. Edit. Cas.

nate personage in it; but that the contrary does happen in striking instances, is well known to those whose ideas of Greek tragedy are taken from Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles; not merely from *Dissertations*, *Bibliothecas*, and *Institutiones Poeticæ*.

The chorus, in several antient tragedies, are themselves principal personages, and deeply interested; the piece is named from them, and they take up with their ode, or their share of the dialogue, a great part of it. Nor let it be said this happened when tragedy was far departed from its original form; for the further we go toward the source, we find this the more the case in the earliest. In those of Æschylus, it is most eminently so; in all his pieces the chorus' part bears a much greater proportion to the rest than in those of his successors: four of his seven remaining are named from their choruses; in all they bear a striking part of the action and interest; in two they are the leading personages, Eumenides and Iketides; and, particularly in the last, their fortune is the sole object of attention, and their distress of concern: they are, as we may say, the hero of the piece. And this, as it is utterly inconsistent with the Doctor's hypothesis, and destructive of it, so it is the natural consequence of the commonly received account, that the chorus, which was once the whole, and still by custom sacred, should upon the first alteration still continue the principal part; should only by degrees be lessened, and become no more than accessory to the episode: so that, with whatever force and spirit Dr. B— may obtrude his conjectures on us, and tell us, that 'tis altogether repugnant to the nature of things to suppose otherwise than he supposes; I cannot think that repugnant to the nature of things, which testimony and argument assure us did really happen. Tho' (continues he) "the first rise and progress of the tragic species in Greece were hid in darkness thro' a want of recording history, we

" might fairly conclude, &c." Indeed if there were no history, we might guess as we pleased; what then? " But ancient history is not silent on this subject." Too true, as we have seen, and therefore it had been better the Doctor had been silent. " But it gives us a variety of facts which overturn the common system." Let us see them.—" Plato says expressly, that tragedy was very antient in the city of Athens, and practised there long before the age of Thespis." But does Plato say, that by tragedy, or τραγῳδία, he means what we do? or did he mean only a Poem, so called, and performed entirely by a choir? That antient tragedy was of the latter kind, we have already proved.—Plato declares, in this he speaks contrary to the general opinion; and paradoxes, for the most part, are only the use of words in an unusual sense—And for the word Tragedy, Dr. B— himself will allow that Plato uses it laxly and ambiguously, when he is reminded or informed that that philosopher often applies it to the writings of Homer, styles him the prince of Tragedy *, the leader and author of it †, and the first of Tragic writers ‡; for this is a point the Doctor seems to have much at heart to disprove.

" We are assured, proceeds the Doctor, on the authority of other writers," (A good method of proving this, by invisible witnesses! Why does not the Doctor name them? they are not named in his expository, Vossius's *Inst. Poet.*) " that a report prevailed in Greece, that certain tragic poets had in antient times contended at the tomb of Theseus." Were but the words *in antient times* omitted, we should say the unknown witnesses were honest men, and only attested what every body knows, and what is nothing to the purpose; for it is notorious that the remains of Theseus were not found, intombed or

* In *Thaeteto*. † Lib. 8. de Rep. ‡ Lib. 10. de Rep.

Honoured until the days of Cimon; and that, on that occasion, Sophocles tore away the prize from Æschylus*; and, probably, some confused notion of this was running in Vossius's head, or the person he copied from—but the addition, *in ancient times*, involves a contradiction. Now, whether the Doctor would chuse to have it thought he was ignorant of a transaction which every smatterer in history knows; or that he quoted against his knowledge in support of his own hypothesis, I leave him to determine: but I should be very sorry to have such an alternative before me †.

“ Suidas, says Dr. B—, mentions one Epigenes by name, “ as prior to the age of Thespis”—He does; but seems by another place, as we observed before, to be of a different opinion himself: for this he mentions as delivered by others, and delivered variously, and with contradictions ‡.

But now follows a passage, which I do look upon to be the master-piece of Dr. B—'s whole work; where I know not which most to admire, the learning, exactness, fidelity, or judgment.—“ A still stronger evidence presents itself §.”

The

* Plutarch in Cimine.

† Our friend . . . who was with me when I wrote this, told me he feared I was mistaken; for that, as he remembered, Mr. Boyle, in his answer to Bentley, quoted Plutarch in the Life of Theseus for the very thing Dr. B— mentions. I told him I did not know what Mr. Boyle said, and had not the book to consult; but offered a large wager there was no such thing in the life of Theseus. Some days after, he informed me that Mr. Boyle had, in an appendix, owned himself wrong in this; and confessed he had been misled by Scaliger. Now is not Dr. B— an extraordinary man, who cannot let the acknowledged errors of great men sleep in their graves; but exposes them anew, by adopting them. Mr. Boyle, says the Doctor. [Note f. on Art. 19,] seems once or twice to get out of the common track of criticism on this subject. If we may judge by Dr. B—'s success, it is very well he went no farther nor oftener out of it.

‡ Suidas in Thespida.

§ Ἀγχι δὲ ὁ μὲν ἀρχαῖος ἐν Δελφοῖς κτεταρωμένος ὑμνήθη, πάντας ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. Ἐδρεον δὲ Δελφοῖς μετὰ τοῦ Κριστοῦ π. λ. μ. οἱ δὲ Ἀμφικτυόνες, ἰκτινὸς καὶ γορμῶν ἐν Ἐορδαίῳ δαμάσαντες γαλακτίῳ.

This passage of Strabo I have transcribed, to save you the trouble of consulting, and shall translate it literally: "The original games at Delphi consisted of singers to the harp, who sung Pæans in honour of the god. The Delphians were the establishers of this, after the Crissæan war: it was the Amphictyons who ordained equestrian and gymnastic games, with crowns for the victors, in the time of Euryolchus; and they called these the Pythian games: besides the singers to the harp, they added players on the flute, and on the harp *without vocal music*; who were to perform a certain piece of music, which is called the Pythian *nomos*, modulation or composition. Of this there are five parts, the (ανακρουσις) pulsation or prelude; the (αμπειρα) attempt; the (κατακλεισμός) exhortation; the iambi and dactyls, the (συριγγες) whistles.—It may be observed to this purpose, that Timosthenes, who was commander of the fleet of the second Ptolemy, the same who wrote of harbours in ten books, wrote a lyric poem, in which his design is to celebrate the contention of Apollo with the Serpent (or as the words may be otherwise rendered, will have it, that the contention of Apollo with the Serpent is celebrated) in that modulation. Declaring or explaining, ανακρουσις, the prelude; αμπειρα, the first attempt, or opening of the contest; κατακλεισμός, the contest itself. The iambus and dactyl, the song of victory, in those measures of which this one is

γεφαντίῳ, καὶ Πυθία ἐκαλεῖται. Προγίθισαι δὲ τοὺς κιθαρινοὺς ἀλλήλους τι, καὶ κιθαρίσας χωρὶς ᾠδῆς, ἀποδιδόντας τι μελῶς, ὃ καλεῖται νομὸς Πυθικῶς. Πέντε δὲ αὐτοῦ μέρη εἰναι, ἀνακρουσις, ἀμπειρα, κατακλεισμός, ἱamboὶ καὶ δακτύλοι, συριγγες. Ἐμμελοποιήσῃ μὲν οὖν Τιμοσθένης ὁ καυαρχὸς τοῦ δευτέρου Πτολεμαίου, ὃ καὶ τοὺς λαμίας συντάξας ἐν δέκα βιβλίοις. Βούλεται δὲ τοὶ ἀγῶνα τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ πρὸς τοῦ δράκοντα διὰ τοῦ μελῶς ὑμνεῖν. Ἀνακρουσὴν μὲν τὸ προοίμιον ὀφείλει. Ἀμπειραν δὲ τὴν πρώτην καταπειρὰν τοῦ ἀγῶνος. Κατακλεισμοὶ δὲ αὐτοὶ τοὶ ἀγῶνα. Ἰamboὶ δὲ καὶ δακτύλοι τοὶ ἐπιταλαινωτοὶ τοῦ ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ μετὰ τοιοῦτον ῥυθμῶν, ὡς ὃ μὲν ὑμνοὶς οἰκείῳ εἶναι; ὃ δὲ ἱamboὶ κακιστοί. [as supplet. Casaub.] καὶ ποικιλιζέειν. Συριγγες δὲ τὴν ἐκείνην τοῦ θύριου μίμουμένην, ὡς αἱ κατασφραγίδες ἐν σφραγίδος τινος συριγγῶν. Strabo. lib. 9. Cas. Ed. pag. 425.

“ peculiar

“ peculiar to hymns; the other, and the word derived from
 “ it, *ταυβίζω*, to insult and reproach; and, lastly, syringes,
 “ of the mimicking the death of the Serpent ending his life
 “ with hisses.”

A few such mistakes as the Doctor here presents you with in a bunch, would serve a man of ordinary genius to spread thro' a whole book. First, the passage is corrupt, as the commentators agree; and therefore conclusions from it must be admitted but with caution; and the reader should be informed what he has to trust to. 2dly, In the name of wonder, what is it to the purpose when the question is, “ Whether tragedy was before or after Thespis?” to tell us of an establishment made after the Crissæan war, which was in Solon's * time, who was cotemporary with Thespis? What would you think of my proving that something was long before the time of Shakespear, by saying it was immediately after the defeat of the Spanish Armada?

Is it not a fine thing for a man to set up for an instructor of mankind, who is ignorant of what his commonest readers know? But this Crissæan war, it seems, was of great antiquity in the Doctor's chronology; for he reckons this passage as long before *Homer himself*. You may stare; but the assertion is in his seventh Section, in the third Article of the deduction of the progress of comedy in Greece.—But to proceed—3dly, The musical contest, which is here described, was entirely *instrumental*; and how the Doctor can make that a tragedy, or the outline of a tragedy, none can tell, but—that d—l within—who guides all those that know not what they mean. But as the Doctor will have tragedy where there are no *actors*, it was but the next step to tragedy without words too. 4thly, The names of the five parts of this music were

* Solon had his share in the success of it. See his life in Plutarch.

not, it should seem, perfectly well understood; for they are differently explained *; and Strabo offers the opinion or explanation of Timosthenes, who, it is probable, divided his poem into five parts with those names; each on the subject which he explains its name to signify. But what is this to Dr. B—'s purpose? or what if he had written a tragedy in five acts, since Strabo tells who he was, and when he lived, viz. under the Ptolemies, about three hundred years after both the establishment of this music, and the time of Thespis? This is the Doctor's method of *showing*, of *making it appear*, that the full form of savage tragedy had appeared many years before Thespis.—I shall sum up the argument.—Because, *about the time of Thespis*, there was established a concert of *merely instrumental music*, divided into five parts, the names of which were explained in a particular manner by one who lived *three hundred years after*; Ergo, &c.—In another part of his work the Doctor tells us, that *as he finds* tragedy in this passage of Strabo, so he finds comedy too †: and, indeed, he is in the right of it; for *so* he might find any thing.

In the 20th Article, the Doctor takes a great deal of pains to shew that the “general body of critics, from Aristotle down to our times, are wrong” in supposing that Æschylus was only a casual imitator of Homer, and drew the ideas of *all* his tragedies from the Iliad. The words I have marked should be omitted, for the Doctor lays more to the charge of the critics than they assert. Those who are pretty intimately acquainted with the Greek tragedy can judge of this question, which would take too long time to discuss; or, perhaps, it might produce some pretty strong internal arguments on the affirmative. “Scaliger (says the Doctor) is a venerable exception.

* See Potter's Antiquities on the Pythian games.

† Latter part of the 7th section, article 3.

“to the general body of critics on this subject;” and doubtless the Doctor himself is another. Yet I think I can produce an authority on the other side no less venerable than them both: a testimony which, however, I am far from pretending the Doctor will not, if he pleases, refute by some argument *a priori*; from the spirit of ages, or the legislative principles of the time. For it is only the testimony of Æschylus himself; of whom it was a common and well-known saying, as Athenæus tells us, that his pieces were small scraps or morsels of the magnificent entertainment of Homer *. After this, I cannot but be diverted with the Doctor’s elaborate arguments to prove the contrary; and view Æschylus in the light of the poor fellow in the farce, who modestly professes himself that he is but a faggot-binder, but is beaten into a physician.

In the 22d Article, the Doctor deduces rightly enough the unities from the practice of a chorus (tho’ I think he does not prove the *unity of place*); particularly, the *mere* effect of that practice. I am very glad to find in his critical reasonings, as well as in some *poetical expressions*, he can condescend to follow a gentleman whom he has treated with such *indignity*, as will justify any person who shall appear to answer him, in expressing fully the severity which his errors, as a writer, deserve. Now I am on this subject I must observe, that tho’ perhaps it may be made to appear, that the chorus is not to be revived in English tragedy, yet the elegant attempts of a poet to diffuse a true taste, and to contribute to the virtuous

* Το. Αισχυλῶς δὲ τὰς αὐτοῦ τραγωδίας τιμᾶται ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ Ομήρου μαραθῶν διπλῶν.

Deipn. lib. 8. p. 347.

The same declaration is put into his mouth by Aristophanes, from whence we may conclude it was his well-known sentiment: Οὐκ ἔμειν ἀπαραζήμιον. From whence, (90 v., says the Scholiast, ἡγού, αὐ τοῦ ομήρου) My soul taking off impressions and resemblances, &c. Raris, act. 4. scen. 2.

amusement of mankind, ought to be received at least with candour, if not with indulgence; and some people should be cautious how they deal in insinuations against such men as the author of *Elfrida* and *Caractacus*, lest their dislike be attributed as much to jealousy of superior excellence, as to want of taste to relish the beauties of the writer they would deery.

Art. 23. The union of music with tragedy, he says, was never accounted for; to which I add, nor is it yet. But of that you will hear another time.

Art. 25. On his account of the masque and buskin, which he says arose from the custom of selecting the tallest and strongest men for their chiefs; I have to observe, that the actions of their tragedies are almost universally taken from a period in which their kingdoms were hereditary; and in which men succeeded not by election, for bulk, or any thing else, but by birth and descent.

Concerning his comment on Aristotle's definition of tragedy, I have more to say than you or I have, at present, time for; and, indeed, the task of combating chimeras, and fighting tho' against but the shadows of arguments, is not so pleasant, that I should longer be detained by it from more useful purposes, or agreeable amusements; but, in general, I must observe to you, that, in my opinion, had tragedy, according to the Doctor's notion, arisen in the savage state of Greece, it never would have reached the pitch of excellence it did, and which it owes to its being late invented; and if this be true, it shews us how well qualified the Doctor was to give an account of its rise and progress.—And with this I shall close my animadversions on this account of the Greek tragedy.—And, for what remains, I shall only mention slightly a few of the many instances of failure in his history of the arts; for I have neither time nor inclination left for more. Such as—His insisting that

that the * institution of the Pythian Games in the 48th Olymp. was no more than a separation of the gymnastic exercises from the musical, in which they had been confounded before; whereas the words of Strabo, whom he quotes, are as clear as possible, that only the musical subsisted before; and that the gymnastic and equestrian were then added to them †.—His interpreting as an account of the effect of music on manners, what Plato means only as an illustration of the ill effects of a licentious democratic spirit, in not paying due reverence to those of superior abilities, station, and character, which proceeds from small matters to great ‡.

Several in his history of Comedy—His supposing that the writings of Archilochus were banished from Sparta on account of their sarcastic turn, which was indeed on account of their obscenity §; sarcastic verses being encouraged at Sparta, and making a part of their festal and legal solemnities.—His curious comment || on *Xenophon de Rep. Athen.* †† without taking the least notice of Xenophon's well-known dislike of the democratic constitution.—His explaining what Xenophon says of the rich or powerful, the better sort as we say, as if he meant good and virtuous men; whereas, as I remember, Xenophon says, that these *βέλτεροι* always oppress and make slaves of the people where they can. 2dly, His quoting a passage which is corrupt; but, according to the best we can make of it, implies, that in the gymnastic and musical

* Art. 27. of sect. 6.

† See the passage quoted at full length.

‡ Article 34.

§ *Quod parum verecundum ac pudicam lectionem arbitrabantur. Val. Maxim. lib. 6. cap. 3.*

The Doctor, by a slight mistake of one historian for another, quotes the sixth book of *Paterculus*, of whom there are but three.

|| Sect. 7. latter part of art. 5.

†† Ibidem.

exercises (as in some few other instances) the people left the management of them to the rich, because expensive; and explaining this to mean the direct contrary, that they took these out of the hands of the better sort *. 3dly, Xenophon says, it is the natural effect of a democracy, that they will have all satire aimed not at the people in general, but at individuals, knowing that those will naturally be some of the *rich*, the *noble*, or the *powerful* (these words Dr. B— explains, Those of *higher station and worth*); except, continues Xenophon, one of the people is rallied for his busy ambition and affectation of distinction, Δια πολυπραγμοσύνην καὶ διὰ τὸ ζῆλον πλεονεξίας † (I appeal to any man who understands Greek, whether these words are not used in an ill sense); to distinguish himself by something praise-worthy, says the Doctor.

His admirable proof ‡ of the so much disputed authenticity of Fingal, by its observation of true manners and notions of the people who are its subject, in one instance; as if a man should disprove a charge of forgery by shewing an exact resemblance of hands in one letter of the alphabet.

His attributing the original defect of the poetical arts in Rome §, to a cause which subsisted in those very states which brought them to the greatest perfection, viz. their being a colony.—And his close of that eleventh Section, in which, to shew his historical skill, he makes Nero blacker than any historian that ever I read or remember.

I could go on; but for reasons which will occur to you, I will stop here, and close with two observations. I might, from the failure of Dr. B—'s argumentation on subjects with which I am acquainted, fairly suspect as great deficiency in those parts of his work where I am less qualified to form an opinion. But where a

* Sect. 7.

† Lunel. Xen. pag. 698.

‡ Sect. 3.

§ Sect. 11.

man makes up a system, and tells you the natural consequences of his system are these, and upon examining I find reason to believe these natural consequences did not subsist; and when I see they cannot be proved without misquoting, misrepresenting fact, and confounding all history; I have there a right to do more than suspect; I have a right to use the form of argument I remember in my logic, *Falsum posterius, ergo etiam prius*.

The other observation is, That this fault of misquoting, of which Dr. B— is so flagrantly guilty, is one of the greatest a writer can commit, because it disappoints the very end of writing, the promotion and facilitating of knowledge.

So long as writers inviolably adhere to truth in this point, so long can the majority of readers, with ease, satisfaction, and certainty, take up with their accounts, as well as judge of their arguments; and acquire general knowledge of things, which else would not have come in their way, or without much, perhaps, unpleasing study. But he who palpably and signally misrepresents his authorities, not only misleads his readers in a particular point, but makes men suppose that they are not to depend on accounts given them, but must go up to the fountain-head; and as few can do this, the bulk must be content to remain in doubt and ignorance.

So far then as, by citing falsely, a writer lessens men's ease and satisfaction in acquiring knowledge; so far is he an enemy to the state of learning, and as far as learning is generally advantageous, is proportionably detrimental to mankind.

* * * * *

I am, dear Doctor,

Yours sincerely,

man makes up a system, and tells you the natural consequences of his system are those, and upon examining I find reason to believe these natural consequences did not follow; and when I see they cannot be proved without misquoting, misrepresenting fact, and confounding all history, I have there a right to do more than suspect; I have a right to use the term of imposture. I remember in my logic, I have given a good definition.

The other observation is, That this fault of misquoting, of which Dr. B. is so flagrantly guilty, is one of the greatest a writer can commit, because it disposes the very end of writing, the promotion and facilitating of knowledge.

So long as writers invariably adhere to truth in this point, so long can the most useful and useful, satisfaction, and certainty, take place in the world, as well as judge of their arguments, and the knowledge of things, which the world would not have without much, perhaps, of the same. But the who pass by and signally misrepresents his authorities, not only misleads his readers in a particular point, but makes men suppose that they are not to depend on accounts given them, but must go up to the fountain-head; and as few can do this, the bulk must be content to remain in doubt and ignorance.

So far then as, by citing falsely, a writer leads men's ears and attention in acquiring knowledge; so far is he an enemy to the state of learning, and as far as teaching is generally ad- vanced, is proportionally detrimental to mankind.



I am, dear Doctor,

Yours sincerely,

